



Parliamentarians for Global Action

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) Announces Recipients of the 2003 Defender of Democracy Awards

For Immediate Release

NEW YORK, June 9, 2003 – Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) will present the 2003 Defender of Democracy Awards to H.E. Mr. George Papandreou, Foreign Minister of Greece, and to Dr. Chee Soon Juan, Secretary-General of the Singapore Democratic Party, on September 16th at PGA's 25th Anniversary Tribute in Washington, D.C.

As part of PGA's 25th Anniversary Tribute, this year's Defender of Democracy Award Dinner will take place in the Library of Congress. Since 1996, PGA has held its annual Defender of Democracy Awards in conjunction with its Annual Parliamentary Forum. The Defender of Democracy Award honors those individuals who have defended the principles of democracy, peace and justice around the world.

Mr. Papandreou recently lobbied for Cyprus's acceptance into the European Union and has intensified his initiatives towards peaceful relations between Greece and Turkey. Mr. Papandreou held numerous positions in the Greek government including Minister of Education and Religious Affairs and coordinator of the bid for the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. He has served as an MP since 1981. Peacebuilding and reconciliation issues have long been a fundamental interest for the minister, who is a founding member of both the Helsinki Citizens Assembly and the Lagonisi Initiative on Cooperation in the Balkans. Mr. Papandreou was also a key force behind the movement for the Olympic Truce initiative and is vice-chairman of the Olympic Truce Foundation. Mr. Papandreou is a member of the Board of the Foundation of Mediterranean Studies and the Foundation for Research and Self-Education as well as the Cambridge Foundation for Peace.

In the past several decades in Asia, as elsewhere, countries have been struggling to adapt, change, and develop their economic structures to face modern and global challenges with a balance of political development, including good governance, rule of law, and democratic principles. Government and citizens are striving for greater transparency, openness, independence of judiciary, and acceptance of diversity of opinions and views, a trend that PGA welcomes. Dr. Chee will be awarded the Defender of Democracy Award for his work towards a broadening and deepening of democratic roots in Singapore. Dr. Chee is the Secretary General of the Singapore Democratic Party. He is a neurophysiologist by training, educated in the United States. Dr. Chee is currently the Chair of the 18-nation Alliance for Reform and Democracy in Asia.

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